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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 000838

SIPDIS

FOR EUR/SE AND EUR/SCE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/24/2015

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MK](#) [GR](#) [MACEDONIA](#)

SUBJECT: MACEDONIA NAME ISSUE: MFA SAYS MACEDONIA NEEDS TO
SHOW FLEXIBILITY

REF: SKOPJE 400

Classified By: AMB. CHARLES P. RIES FOR REASONS 1.4(B) AND (D)

1. (C) Poloff contacted Vassilis Costis, deputy head of the MFA's Balkan Directorate, on March 24 for an update on Greek-Macedonian relations. Costis made the following points:

-- Greece had seen a "very negative, intransigent" stance on the part of Macedonia in the aftermath of the USG decision. This had been made manifest in the last two UN-sponsored negotiation sessions on the name issue. As such, it could not be "business as usual" and Costis said this feeling may have been reflected in fewer contacts between the two countries.

-- However, Greece's posture could not be characterized as a freezing of relations, just that Athens now looked at contacts with Macedonia on a "case by case" basis to register its displeasure with Macedonia's inflexibility.

-- Macedonian FM Mitreva was the most inflexible of any leader in the government and had played a substantial role in the current deadlock on the name issue. FM Mitreva's request to visit Athens had to be weighed in relation to this unhelpful role.

-- Greece had moved off its initial refusal to consider options that included the word "Macedonia." It was willing to show even greater flexibility if Macedonia would also. Athens hoped that the next round of negotiations would make progress.

2. (C) Maja Balaburski, Macedonian DCM in Athens, confirmed to us on March 24 that Greece had put "soft pressure" on Macedonia after the USG decision by holding up bilateral agreements and generally making it more difficult for her Embassy to have access.
Ries